

Program Evaluation and Development Committee Report – June 17, 2008

Accomplishments of the Committee

In September, the Program Evaluation Committee sent surveys to 32 selected service providers in the County. Surveys were mailed to the selected programs. The Vera Institute reported its results from the survey to the Committee.

Key Findings of Survey Vera Institute received 21 of the 32 surveys mailed by the October deadline. Vera had also been in touch with five of the other programs and was expecting their returned surveys in November.

- There is no standardized method of data collection
- Very few programs (7 of 27) collect data to measure recidivism
- There is no standardized definition of recidivism
- There is no standard time frame in which to measure recidivism

The lack of standardized data collection means that it is difficult to compare programs and difficult for programs to share data among themselves

- It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine if an individual has been served multiple programs
- Very few programs have been externally evaluated for effectiveness
- Successful completion is not a measure of effectiveness

Recommendation: Improve Program Data Collection Methods. The gold standard for measuring effectiveness is to have an external group conduct a process (fidelity) and impact (outcome) evaluation.

- Develop a standardized list of key data elements that all programs should collect to track outcomes
- Require all programs receiving county funding to collect designated data elements and report outcomes to the county annually
- Agree on a standardized definition of recidivism for the county and a method to track recidivism
- Hamilton County should develop a process for collecting, analyzing, and reporting recidivism rates to the public annually

Work Currently Pending

Based on the results of the survey and the need to develop a uniform data collection tool, the Committee began discussions on what data each program should be collecting. The Committee discussed issues that commonly arise out of uniform data collection and evaluation, such as privacy concerns, scenarios where a participant is in multiple programs at one time, programs obligated to take clients because of judicial orders, tracking participants upon program completion and overall definitions of recidivism and success. Through these conversations, the committee created a criterion of information that each service provider should be collecting from participants regardless of the services provided.

2008 Action Items

Now that an established set of criteria has been selected, the committee will begin discussing how to take into account and factor in the different types of service providers and begin developing performance measures to track outcomes and improve quality. With the help of leaders in the business community, the committee will utilize proven logic-based performance measurements to develop methods of evaluation that allow all programs to be evaluated equally, while taking into account the variables and difference between the service providers. The Committee will work to convene all relevant programs and agencies in the coming months to move towards a County-wide evidence-based approach to reentry and intervention work.